

Remarks As Prepared For Delivery
By the Honorable Shana Dale
NASA Deputy Administrator
Center Director Briefing
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Thank you for that kind introduction Susan [*Susan Kroskey, Chief Financial Officer of Kennedy Space Center and event emcee*]

I'd also like to thank Bill, for his leadership at the Kennedy Space Center. It is appreciated.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you, our special guests, for coming here and being a part of one of the most amazing experiences you will ever have. No, not listening to me!

Rather, we have all come to see the launch of the Endeavour. This launch, this assembly mission to the International Space Station – is the real attraction. Space Shuttle liftoffs are special events. They transform years of meticulous planning and relentless precision into a few seconds of power and a lot of fuel – the dream of flight into the reality of a white bird lifting into a darkening sky.

So enjoy this experience. It is what makes us proud at NASA. Remember the people who are making it possible – the engineers, researchers, scientists, astronauts and many, many others. And remember that all of them – and all of you – are part of this great effort of exploration.

For STS-118's mission is, as its motto reads, one of building the station and building the future.

I will let Colonel (Patrick) Forrester explain the mechanics of this mission but I will tell you this crew will continue building the International Space Station so we can increase the scientific research we do on board. This mission will also mark the first flight of a new power transfer system, which is designed to supplement the electrical output from the shuttle's fuel cells. Ultimately, the new system should allow the shuttle to stay on station at the International Space Station for longer periods of time than what we currently do.

After all, spacecraft are more than technological marvels; they are creations of innovative, driven people. And that's the other important aspect of Endeavour's mission.

Endeavour's mission is also dedicated to building people – to encouraging students and teachers all across the country to become active participants in this new era of exploration.

During the mission, the crew will be talking live with teachers and students about what it is like to live and work in space. The crew of STS-118 will also be conducting a series of experiments designed to engage students in some of the hard challenges that must be faced when traveling for long periods in space. They include questions like: How do you sustain life for long duration on the Moon, Mars and beyond? What kinds of plants are best to grow and how do you grow them?

As an experiment, the crew of STS-118 is taking up 10 million basil seeds that after launch will be distributed to students and teachers across the country to study as well as plant growth chambers for experiments.

Tonight's mission is one more step toward that future, of completing the International Space Station and then reaching outwards again.

Thank you again for coming here and showing your support for America's space program. Godspeed Endeavour!